

Weekly Connector: Happy Memorial Day!

May 24, 2018

Hello, Church!

This special weekend of Memorial Day marks the beginning of the summer season and a great opportunity to spend special time with family and friends. While we enjoy the holiday, let's also take a few moments and remember its purpose.



I believe most of us would struggle to grasp the human cost of the violence of war. When asked, those who have experienced war first hand rarely want to talk about it. Oftentimes, it is something experienced long ago best left there.

We might find it difficult to imagine, then, the loss of over 600,000 sons and fathers after the Civil War. A splintered nation, reeling from loss as never before experienced in its young history, needed to do something to remember - to grieve. This led to the nation-wide decorating of the graves of those lost to this war. This was not isolated to a specific area, but became an increasingly important tradition in villages, towns, and cities across the country.

Initially, the date of Memorial Day was fixed on May 30th. Then, in the 1960's the date was moved to the last Monday of May that allowed for a three day weekend holiday. While we can't avoid the practicality of the decision, the end result for many of us is a reduction in the solemnity of the moment. Real men and women died to ensure that all of us would enjoy the freedoms we have today - brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters.

So, this weekend, let's take time to remember those who gave their all so that we could freely worship Christ, celebrating His sacrifice ensuring our freedom from sin and reconciliation with God.

Their sacrifice is an example of what Jesus said and did: *"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends."* John 15:13. For soon after He spoke these words, He acted on them: *"Christ died for sins, once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God."* 1 Peter 3:18

In an incredible first step, Jesus not only shows us His example of self-sacrifice but commands we do the same: *If anyone come after Me, he must deny Himself, take up his cross daily and follow Me."* Luke 9:23

Before you believe that opportunities for self-sacrifice will not be presented to you, please reconsider. Before the end of the day, I believe each of us will have opportunities to put God and others first. Pray that God open our eyes to these opportunities, take action on them, and write them down. Have plenty of paper on hand for your list may be long!

Our Sermon Series "The #Blessed" continues this Sunday with another Blessed Statement: *Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. Matthew 5:9* Do you know what it means to "make peace"? As we have discovered throughout this series, it may not be what you think it is. Please bring a friend and find a seat in the Sanctuary before 10AM as we gather together to celebrate the One who has set the example for us to love one another.



I love you, Church!

Pastor greg

PS: On Monday morning, at 9:30AM, come by Smith Gym (northeast of the church) and be a part of the East Canton Memorial Day parade! Come and ride your bikes or ride on the trailer as we distribute Candy, VBS invitations, and church information while greeting our neighbors. It's a great time to reach into the community with Christ's love.